



SWAN Action Sheet

Banning Plastic Bags in Your Community!



Several Villages in Alaska have been fed up with plastic bags littering their communities. They decided to hunt these "snow birds" that are not part of our traditional environment. Here's how a few Villages have taken action:

1 RESEARCH VILLAGE TIPS:

Native Village of Tanana Contact: Kathleen Peters-Zuray 366-7160

Developing a plastic bag ban has been an on-going process over two years for the Native Village of Tanana's Environmental Department. It started with community cleanups. When they cleaned up around the dump they noticed they were picking up 70-90 plastic bags at a time. To **take action**, they sent around pictures of the dump with all the plastic bags to let people know about the problem. They brought the issue to the Tribal and City Council's and asked about creating a plastic bag ban in the community. The community voted to ban plastic bags and a Tribal resolution was passed. The City Council is currently working through the plastic bag ban ordinance.

The staff contacted Reuseablebags.com, and bought mesh nylons bags to replace the plastic bags. Along with the mesh bags, they ordered buttons to pass out that say "Plastic Bags Blow!" to promote awareness of the problem. The Tanana Environmental Department believes that education is a big part of trying to change community habits and has been necessary for the ban to be effective. They give kids talks in the school to teach about the problem. According to the staff, a plastic bag ban has definitely been a process for the community and it has taken time for community members to change their ways and start using the new bags.

Louden Tribal Council Contact: Cindy Pilot 656-1711

The Loudon Tribal Council passed a resolution prohibiting their local stores from using plastic shopping bags. To promote community acceptance of the ban, Loudon used a 1999 EPA grant to purchase \$2,000 worth of canvas shopping bags for people to use instead.

New Stuyahok Traditional Council Contact: Andrew Wassille 693-3173

To reduce the plastic bags in the community, the New Stuyahok Board got together with their local store and stopped ordering plastic bags. Paper bags with handles are now used instead. The paper bags are working very well for them.

2 DEVELOP AN ORDINANCE OR STORE AGREEMENTS:

Call the contacts above listed for examples, or look up "Ordinances" at: <http://www.ccthita-swan.org/main/a-z.cfm>

3 WHERE TO PURCHASE REUSABLE BAGS:

- ◆ Reuseablebags <http://www.reuseablebags.com> 1 (888) 707-3873 (recommended by Tanana)
- ◆ The Cloth Bag Company <http://www.clothbag.com> (770) 393-0058 (recommended by Skaqua TC)
- ◆ Enviro-Tote <http://www.enviro-tote.com> 1-800-TOTE BAG